

File  
International

INTERNATIONAL Y.M.C.A.

FRENCH DAY CAMP REPORT

1968

R. Wilson,  
Director.

FRENCH DAY CAMP REPORT  
BACKGROUND INFORMATION  
1968

International Y.M.C.A.'s French Day Camp has just completed its second summer. Based on last year's experience the goals for this year were as follows.

- 1) To try to help the children in the area overcome difficulties in learning a third language in the school system.
- 2) To try to begin to help English and French speaking children to understand each other.
- 3) To begin to introduce New Canadians to the culture of the majority of the province of which they have been unaware.
- 4) To demonstrate an alternative learning method to that employed in the schools at present.
- 5) To enable children to learn new skills (in areas other than language ) e.g.  
a) social skills in their groups, b) sports, swimming and craft skills, etc.
- 6) To provide children with an exciting, worthwhile "fun" experience.

These goals were more thoroughly spelled out in the program proposal dated May 1968 as were the following recommendations.

1. It is recommended that - French Camp be expanded so that we can deal with approximately 200 participants.
2. It is recommended that further research and thought be given to the development of this method of learning and that some funds be made available now for the preparation of necessary equipment and aids.
3. It is recommended that next year's program run for 6 weeks, 5 or 6 hours a day.
4. It is recommended that a thorough training program be designed for next year's leaders.
5. It is recommended that the possibilities for the use of an outdoor area within walking distance of the Y be investigated.
6. It is recommended that all possible areas of financial support be thoroughly investigated.

We propose to conduct the program this year in line with the recommendations. The strength of last year's program (notably the use of the small group which plans and runs its own program and the employment of competent French Canadian advisors) will be retained. The carrying out of these recommendations will enlarge and strengthen the program.

It is hoped that this year the program can be made available to 200 children. For this hope to become a reality, funds must be found to subsidize the program. Otherwise, the cost to the participants would be far more than their ability to pay.

Based on two periods of three weeks each, each period serving 100 children, the following budget has been drawn up. Three scales of fees have been used, and produce three different subsidies required.

PROPOSED BUDGET - MARCH 1968

Income (based on three fee scales per three-week period)

1st Period	A	B	C	A	B	C
100 children @	5.00	7.50	10.00	500.	750.	1000.
2nd Period @	5.00	7.50	10.00	500.	750.	1000.
				<hr/>		
Total Income				1000.	1500.	2000.

Expenses

Director	3 months 1/5 time and 6 weeks full time	1040.
Counsellors	10 @ 350. for 7 weeks including one week training.	3500.
Materials		400.
Miscellaneous		<u>200.</u>
Total Expenses		5140.

Subsidy required (a) with \$ 5.00 fee	\$ 4140.
(b) with \$ 7.50 fee	3640.
(c) with 10.00 fee	3140.

With these goals and in the light of these recommendations we set about preparing the 1968 French Day Camp. Following is a brief resumé of what happened this summer, and an evaluation of the concerns of the program, as well as the success of the program.

The budget was based on the premise that support would be found for the program from outside sources; however, this proved to be overly optimistic, and no support was found. Approaches were made to the following organizations without success.

- a) St. Jean Baptiste Societé
- b) Club Richlieu de Montreal
- c) Club Richlieu de Maisonneuve
- d) Rotary Club of Montreal
- e) Optimists Club
- f) Chevaliers de Colomb
- g) Chambre de Commerce de Montreal
- h) Board of Trade - Montreal
- i) Ministère des Affaires Culturelles du Québec
- j) Inter-Service Clubs Council



These applications for support were made between early March and late June but by the start of staff training, it became apparent that no support was forthcoming and other means had to be found.

The fee had to be set at \$ 12 for non members and \$ 10 for Y members, and one immediate result of this was a slow registration. However, we were able to cut back on staff to 6 counsellors, and they agreed to work for a greatly reduced salary of \$ 200 for the summer. In this way the program was able to go forward without too great a loss as the financial statement in the appendix shows.

Training consisted of 5 mornings and 1 evening sessions during the week before camp, during which time the counsellors identified over areas they wanted to work in. An intensive series of skill sessions, and discussions on child development and group process made up the content of the training week.

After a great deal of effort in promotion, the registration for the first period reached 73, giving us an average of 12 children per counsellor. Program highlights of the first period included visits to open air pools, picnics on Mt. Royal, visits to Old Montreal, the Planetarium, and Place Ville Marie. Perhaps the twin high points were a visit for every child to Man and His World on passports supplied by the city Welfare Dept., and an outing to Granby Zoo during the last week of the period. This, added to a regular program of gym, swimming, crafts and games in the Y and local parks, added up to a varied and satisfying program which the children enjoyed thoroughly. As in 1967, each day started with approximately one hour of French vocabulary which was designed to be of relevance to that day's activities. Then the children were encouraged to use their newly acquired vocabulary while taking part in the activity. This method was extremely successful in the increasing fluency and comprehension. Much more difficult, however, was the enforcement of the French only rule, in planning sessions, where the children were trying to plan the following days program. Also the tendency of the children to address each other in English, (or several other languages) was very hard to combat, and all the counsellors reported extreme difficulty in this area. As a result of these difficulties, it would have to be said that the amount of actual involvement of members in planning their own program was much less than is desirable, and while the results of the French tests were excellent, much more can still be accomplished and even more spectacular results achieved, if the children can be motivated to keep to the French only rule. The results of the tests are listed in the second appendix of this report.

The second period registration was considerably lower (53). This was expected because in conversation with first period campers, it was stated many times that they wanted to return for the second period but would not be able to because of the cost. While every effort was made through calls to parents of these children, to assure them that in cases of need, a reduced cost would be arrived at, many would-be campers did not re-register.

In all, 6 campers in the first period and 15 in the second, were subsidized varying amounts, from 2 or 3 dollars, to the full amount of \$12. In addition many campers were subsidized small amounts for special trips like the Granby Zoo visit, or simply for bus fares, etc. While this subsidizing does permit some of the children who can not afford it, to participate in our program, it will never be completely effective in reaching all the people who are unable to pay, and for 1969, some form



of subsidy must be found. As it is, our rates of \$12 for 3 weeks of French Day Camp compares very favourably with similar ventures in other branches, e.g. \$ 29. for 2 weeks, but we must face the fact that \$ 12 is still too high for families whose income in many cases is less than \$ 3,000 per year. No matter what arrangements for subsidies we make, people are scared right off when they hear the price and we never get them all back.

The second period was extremely successful as regards the improvement in French, and the fun the children had. With smaller groups - average size 9, greater personal contact was possible between counsellors and campers, and the slightly higher average improvement in the test scores bears this out. Highlights of the program included a visit to Oka Beach, more visits to Terre des Hommes, and on the last day of camp, a production of Cinderella in French, produced, acted and directed and staged by the children themselves.

The show was a great success, and press and television who were in attendance gave the show rave reviews !

Taken all in all, I feel that the goals of the program were all at least partly achieved.

- 1) Improved French - Despite the aforementioned difficulties the results of the tests and the assessments of each child leave no doubt that this goal was achieved.
- 2) English - French understanding. I feel that this was certainly helped, and was demonstrated in the rapport established between French speaking counsellors and the children, and also by the contacts with French speaking campers in the Summer Fun Club. The older groups became involved in several discussions of the Quebec situation, and one counsellor was called upon to give a short course in French-Canadian history !
- 3) Introduction to French Culture. - This is difficult to achieve in the bilingual setting in Montreal, but visits to Old Montreal, record sessions with recordings by Gilles Vigneault, etc, and the discussions mentioned above certainly helped.
- 4) Alternative Learning Method - The program again amply demonstrated that children learn what they want to learn, when they want to learn it. The counsellors were unanimous in stating that the most learning did not come from the formal vocabulary sessions, but rather from the informal use of the language in conversation during enjoyable activity. Children who came to the French Day Camp only because their parents sent them, could not believe that they were meant to have fun and in many cases it was only after 5 or 6 days that they lost their suspicion that at any moment a formal, repressive, atmosphere might be established. However, once this suspicion was gone, children who had flatly refused to use one word of French at the start, were begging for more words, and experimenting with phrases and sentences.
- 5) Learning of New Skills (other than language)- During the 6 weeks, 27 non-swimmers from the French Day Camp learned to swim, and 18 passed 1 or more swimming cards. This was in a situation where swimming instruction and tests were completely optional at the decision of the group itself, and were conducted most of the time in French also ! Children participated in gymnastics and games throughout the program and some samples of their paintings are on display in the Y. Many



other crafts projects were carried out, and the finished articles taken home. Prizes of passports for Man and His World were distributed for the outstanding crafts productions at the end of each period, and finally, the effort of all concerned in the production of Cinderella was an example of real learning.

While the group participation was not as great as had been hoped, as explained above, progress was also made in areas of inter-social skills with each group. Successful group decision-making and problem solving was achieved with some groups, though there were many failures in this area as well. While this goal is an integral part of the philosophy of the camp, success is always going to be very hard to achieve. The combination of non-directive leadership and having to speak French, added to the normal difficulties encountered by children in this situation in any language, must of necessity limit our expectations in this area.

- 6) Exciting, worthwhile "fun" experience. Without question, this goal was achieved. The number of children who have taken out membership in the Y.M.C.A. is about 30 at time of writing and more are expected when the fall program starts. The attendance figures were high throughout the 6 weeks (see appendix) and several parents have phoned to say how much their children enjoyed the program.

Finally all the counsellors have stated in their reports that they found the experience worthwhile, and 4 out of 6 want to come back next year. For the staff and the director, it has been an enjoyable, worthwhile, learning experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 1969 are:-

- 1) Financial support must be found, both to keep the costs to the children down and to enable us to have smaller groups.
- 2) Greater co-operation from the schools be sought. No co-operation at all was received from the Catholic School Commission. The Protestant School Board distributed flyers, and in a few cases teachers discussed the program with their classes, but much more could have been done.
- 3) While the employment of French Canadian counsellors is essential to the success of the program, as far as possible we should try to have French Canadian counsellors who are bilingual. This would be in order to minimize the very real frustration felt by the counsellors, not in the area of teaching French, this was no problem, but in trying to achieve close personal relationships with children and dealing with some of the children's personal problems. This was very hard to do if the children had to speak French at these times, or if the counsellor was not bilingual. (Only 2 of this years staff were fairly bilingual, none fluently).
- 4) Applications for the program were received from all areas of Montreal, Laval, the South Shore, and the West Island area. It seems obvious that parents in these areas at least, see this program as important and branches concerned with these areas should consider running similar programs in 1969.

APPENDIX I

The final financial statement for the 1968 French Day Camp is as follows.

INCOME:

Program fees	1124.
Membership	204.
Total Income	1328.

EXPENSES:

Salaries - 6 counsellors @ 200.	1200.
Supplies, books & equipment	104.75
Travel & Expenses	57.62
Promotion	72.00
	\$ 1434.37

Deficit \$ 110.37

SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF FRENCH DAY CAMP 1968

1st Period

Number of children registered	73
Number attending more than 5 days	66
Average score before camp	20.8
Average score after camp	33.6
Average improvement	12.8
% improvement	25.6%

SUMMARY OF COUNSELLORS ASSESSMENT OF CHILDRENS PROGRESS

Ex	17	VG	26	G	6	F	8	P	9	- Total	66
Average attendance (possible 15)											13.2

2nd Period

Number registered	53
Number attending more than 5 days	53
Average score before camp	22.8
Average score after camp	38.3
Average improvement	15.5
% improvement	31.0%

SUMMARY OF COUNSELLORS ASSESSMENTS OF CHILDRENS PROGRESS

Ex	10	VG	24	G	13	F	5	P	1	- Total	53
Average attendance (possible 15)											12.3